



UNITED STATES SENATE
**REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE**

Larry E. Craig, Chairman
Jade West, Staff Director

May 21, 2001

The Only Reform that Counts

**Vote for Senator Gregg's "Low-Income
School Choice Demonstration Act"**

Allowing disadvantaged students to escape failing schools and attend the private school of their choice is a key — indeed the most important — reform in President Bush's education blueprint. This week, Senator Gregg will introduce amendment #536 that would give disadvantaged students that option.

- **A demonstration program.** The Gregg amendment would allow 10 localities and three states to provide low-income parents the option of sending their child to the public or private school of their choice. The program would be limited to students who both come from families at or below 185 percent of the poverty level and attend schools that have been identified as failing for three years. The demonstration program would last seven years.
- **Voluntary.** Interested states and localities would apply to participate and must provide detailed information on the types of choice schools that will participate, as well as an assurance that the selected choice schools were in operation at least one year prior to participating. The Education Secretary would give special consideration to applications which serve the highest number of children from low-income families and that provide parents with a diverse range of choice schools from which to select (*i.e.* traditional public schools, charter schools, magnet schools, secular or sectarian private schools).
- **Mandatory program evaluation.** The amendment would require an ongoing evaluation of the program by an independent evaluating entity that measures student achievement, parental involvement and satisfaction, and the impact of the choice program on the overall performance and quality of public schools. The evaluating entity must submit two interim reports and a final evaluation to the Secretary and to Congress.
- **Funding.** The demonstration program in no way would reduce federal funds to school districts. The amendment would authorize \$50 million for fiscal year 2002 and such sums as may be necessary to continue the program throughout its seven-year authorization. The amendment does not interfere with Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, state laws, state constitutions, or current desegregation plans.

Senator Gregg's is a moderate proposal that sends a lifeline to children who otherwise would lose years of their lives trapped in failing schools.

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